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# Regional Council Activity Report

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December 14, 2005



## Executive Director's Report

In developing the Regional Transportation Plan, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) relied heavily on the partnership with the business community to find innovative ways of addressing transportation needs throughout the region. Now, we are once again calling on our business partners to better understand and address recent commodity shortages that are impacting the construction industry.

Shortages in cement, lumber and steel, along with labor shortages, are affecting all sectors of the economy, including housing, schools and commercial construction, as well as transportation and other public works projects. These shortages have led to price increases nationwide and in the region. Here in the Valley, transportation costs for materials have increased significantly.

While it is too soon to know whether these shortages reflect temporary or long-term conditions, we recognize that continued cost increases could have significant economic impacts. To address this issue, MAG will host a "Challenge of Construction" forum in January to examine potential solutions for increasing the supply and availability of materials for construction projects. Participants will include MAG, Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), the Arizona Department of Transportation, the Arizona School Facilities Board, the Home Builders Association of Central Arizona, and the Arizona Builders' Alliance. During the forum, the Arizona chapter of AGC will present a white paper detailing an industry survey of members about rising material costs. Findings of the survey and the association's thoughts on addressing costs will be discussed.

The main objective for this forum is to present a comprehensive overview of the challenges facing the construction industry and to develop implementable action items at all levels, including local, regional, and state levels, as well as within the construction industry itself. The forum includes a two-hour time block dedicated to discussing strategies and solutions.

By having the broader community involved in these discussions, we can look at potential policy changes to mitigate the impacts of the rising construction costs. The Transportation Policy Committee will discuss recommendations made at the forum at its January meeting.

**For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.**



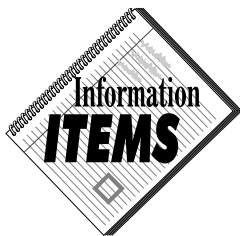
## **Action Items**

### **Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, December 14, 2005**

#### **TIP Amendment and Administrative Adjustment Approved**

The Regional Council approved an amendment and administrative adjustment to the FY 2006-2010 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Since approval of the TIP in July 2005, MAG was notified of two projects from Phoenix and one from Scottsdale that needed to be added to the TIP. In addition, several other changes that were needed were addressed through the administrative adjustment, including: 1) several changes to the funding of Valley Metro transit projects; 2) the deferral of two projects in Tempe and one in Paradise Valley; 3) a change of the funding of an intersection project in Mesa; 4) a restructure of a project in Glendale to advance design a FY 2009 project to FY 2006; 5) and a change to the funding of an ADOT Santan freeway project.

**For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.**



## **Information Items**

### **PM-10 Issues**

The MAG Regional Council received a request for assistance from Maricopa County Supervisor Don Stapley in addressing critical dust control issues. The Valley has experienced a number of high pollution advisories in recent days due to high concentrations of PM-10 (particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less). These concentrations have increased concern regarding the region's ability to successfully meet a deadline for attaining the PM-10 standard by 2006. Supervisor Stapley requested assistance from municipalities in four areas: 1) allowing city building inspectors to be cross-trained by the county so that city staff can assist in identifying and reporting dust control violations; 2) ensuring that municipalities have the most stringent rules and regulations in place regarding unpaved parking lots; 3) eliminating outdated street sweeping equipment and implementing PM-10 efficient sweepers instead; and 4) encouraging legislation restricting open trash burning.

The Regional Council expressed interest in the approach used by the City of Peoria for dust control. The Peoria city code requires that a copy of the Maricopa County Rule 310 (dust control) permit be submitted and incorporated into the grading and drainage permit issued by the city. Local inspectors are

then able to monitor the contractor's compliance with the earthmoving permit and dust control plan.

If the Valley fails to meet the 2006 attainment deadline, MAG would be required to submit plans to reduce emissions by five percent a year until compliance is reached.

**For more information, please contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Director, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Annual Report on the Implementation of Proposition 400**

The Regional Council received the Annual Report on the status of projects funded through the half-cent sales tax, which was approved by the voters of Maricopa County in November 2004. A public hearing on the report was held on November 14, 2005. A presentation outlining key findings of the report was provided. The report is required under state statutes and also includes a reporting requirement for Proposition 300 projects.

Key findings of the report showed that a strong coordination effort is being pursued by the agencies implementing Proposition 400; the life cycle programming process has been initiated for all transportation modes; preliminary life cycle programs are consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan and are in balance with projected revenues; and construction on the Proposition 300 Freeway Program will be completed by mid-2008. The report also concluded that costs are in balance with available revenues. In addition, the Annual Report identified the following future issues of importance: potential costs of future right-of-way will require careful monitoring and may warrant periodic program adjustments; material prices are facing an environment of global competition and limits on supply, affecting future construction costs and cost/revenue balance (see Executive Director's Report above); the federal New Starts Program for light rail may have a major effect on the implementation of light rail route extensions; and minimizing "Scope Creep" (adding features to projects) in the modal programs will continue to be a challenge.

**For more information, please contact Roger Herzog, MAG Senior Project Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Update on Commuter Rail**

In June 2003, the MAG Regional Council approved recommendations of the High Capacity Transit Study. One of the study's components was to evaluate the feasibility of commuter rail for this region. As a result, \$5 million was placed in the Regional Transportation Plan to examine future implementation issues

regarding commuter rail. Recently, interest has been expressed in reexamining commuter rail for the region.

The MAG Regional Council received an update that included review of peer commuter rail systems, rail conditions and operations statewide and in the region, ridership projections, capital and operating costs, and implementation steps. In addition, the Council received a report of possible next steps in the process. They include coordinating with ADOT on a statewide strategy, including commuter rail and freight issues; convening regional stakeholders; developing a draft scope of work to update the commuter rail study; issuing a request for proposals for the study and selecting a consultant, with work expected to begin in July 2007.

**For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Status of Freeway Projects by Corridor**

The MAG Regional Council was given a status report on ADOT's freeway projects and corridor studies. The status report included an update on freeway corridor studies; corridor widening and improvement projects; new traffic interchanges and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) ramp connections; and the South Mountain Freeway corridor. The Environmental Impact Study on the corridor began in 2001 and is expected to be completed in 2007. Three connections with I-10 are being considered: 55th Avenue (MAG adopted connection), 71st Avenue, and Loop 101. At this time, Pecos Road is the only alignment being considered for the east-west section of the South Mountain Freeway. An ADOT/Federal Highway Administration recommendation is expected in February or March 2006. A major amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan would be needed if the alignment changes from the MAG-adopted connection.

**For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300. A presentation with more detailed information about the status of projects by corridor is available on the MAG Web site at [www.mag.maricopa.gov/event.cms?item=4127](http://www.mag.maricopa.gov/event.cms?item=4127).**



### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Next Regional Council Meeting**

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, January 25, 2006 at the MAG Offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include an Update on Particulate Pollution;

consideration of a Draft MAG 208 Water Quality Management Plan Amendment for the expansion of the Town of Buckeye's Sundance Wastewater Treatment Plant; a budget amendment regarding a request for equipment for the MAG 9-1-1 System; approval of the Report on the Need for Increased Domestic Violence Shelter in the MAG Region; a status report on the 2005 Census Survey; potential changes to the approved June 29, 2005 Arterial Life Cycle Program Policies and Procedures; an update on construction costs and possible impacts on the ADOT Life Cycle Program; and recommendation of projects for MAG federal funding in FY 2011 of the FY 2007-2011 MAG Transportation Improvement Program.

**For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.**